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Letter dated 1 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005).

At its sixth meeting, on 8 November 2006, the Working Group adopted its conclusions pertaining to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan (S/2006/662).

I should be grateful if you would have this text issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean-Marc **de La Sablière**
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 1 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict: conclusions on parties in the armed conflict in the Sudan

At its fifth meeting, on 6 September 2006, the Working Group examined the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan, introduced by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of the Sudan participated in the subsequent discussion.

The main elements of the exchange of views among the Working Group were as follows:

Members of the Working Group took note of the report submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 1612 (2005), and participants in the discussion emphasized its quality;

The representative of the Sudan underlined the readiness of the Government of National Unity to cooperate, noted the complexity of the situation in the country after a long lasting civil war, informed about the Government's efforts, such as constitutional, legislative and other measures, to ensure the protection of children, and ensuring these are taken into account by the Working Group, and insisted on the need to keep discussions on children and armed conflict in the Working Group and ongoing discussions in the Security Council on the situation in the Sudan as separate issues;

The participants in the discussion expressed their concern regarding violations cited in the report, such as killing and maiming of children, their recruitment and use as soldiers by many armed forces and groups, grave sexual violence, abductions, and denial of humanitarian access, that continued in the Sudan largely unabated;

Most of the participants called for the adoption of vigorous recommendations in order to improve existing preventive and punitive measures aimed at protecting the rights of the child; end impunity; increase accountability for acts of violence against children committed by members of the military and armed groups; and accelerate the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for children;

The Working Group should envisage recommendations that foster cooperation between humanitarian and other international actors and the parties to the conflict, bringing concrete improvements to the situation of children on the ground, including access of services to children;

The Working Group should ensure that, in the course of implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, the protection of children, with special attention to the girl-child, remains a priority;

Concern was expressed for the lack of humanitarian access, monitoring and assistance to children in several regions of the Sudan;

There was general support for the Secretary-General's intention to send the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict on a mission to the Sudan at an appropriate date in the near future;

Some delegations mentioned, during the discussion, that the implementation of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006) would contribute to improving the situation of children affected by armed conflict in the Sudan.

Further to this meeting, the Working Group has agreed to the following:

A letter to be copied to the Government of Southern Sudan, by the President of the Security Council to the Government of National Unity, urging it:

> To take appropriate legal action against members of parties to armed conflict accused of serious violations and abuses of the rights of children, especially in Darfur,
>
> To take necessary corrective measures throughout the military hierarchy in order to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers in violation of applicable international law by the Sudanese armed forces, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army and any armed group under their control and/or aligned with them,
>
> To take specific action to put an end to the continuous disregard of the Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict by parties to the armed conflict in the Sudan, including the Janjaweed militias, and to fight against impunity,
>
> To take urgent action to tackle gender-based violence, including by ensuring that parties responsible for sexual and gender-based violence are rigorously investigated and prosecuted;

To invite the representative of the Sudan to provide additional information about the efforts the Government of National Unity has already undertaken in the field of legislation in order to fight against the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and about the further steps it intends to take in order to have this legislation fully implemented at all levels and by all armed groups, and to also invite the representative of the Sudan to provide additional information about the situation of children in eastern Sudan;

To request the Secretary-General for additional information on the situation of children in eastern Sudan, to be included in future horizontal notes, as appropriate, by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict;

A letter by the Chair of the Working Group bringing to the attention of United Nations agencies and donor Governments the need to support strengthened and accelerated implementation of sustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the Sudan, in close cooperation with the national authorities of the Sudan, non-governmental organizations and local communities, paying particular attention in this process to girls exploited by armed forces and groups;

To recommend the Secretary-General and the Security Council, when addressing issues in the Sudan, to pay increased attention to children and armed conflict, and continue to preserve and strengthen measures taken for the protection of children, including the capacity to protect girls from rape and other forms of

gender-based violence; and that the Security Council invite the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to do the same;

A letter by the Chair of the Working Group to the Secretary-General welcoming the intention of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to visit the Sudan in the near future.